

**Fact Sheet
February 2004**

La Puerta Elementary School Claremont, California



PLEASE COMMENT ON PLAN TO CLEANUP PROPOSED SCHOOL SITE

*DTSC is one of six
Boards and
Departments within
the California
Environmental
Protection Agency.
The Department's
mission is to
restore, protect and
enhance the
environment, to
ensure public
health,
environmental
quality and
economic vitality,
by regulating
hazardous waste,
conducting and
overseeing
cleanups, and
developing and
promoting pollution
prevention.*

State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency



This fact sheet describes the environmental investigation and proposed hazardous substance cleanup activity for the La Puerta Elementary School site. You are invited to review and comment on a Draft Removal Action Workplan (site cleanup plan) for the proposed school site. The school is located at 2475 N. Forbes Ave., in Claremont, California, 91711. The 9.7-acre site is currently occupied by a former adult school, associated buildings, and adjacent undeveloped land.

THIS FACT SHEET TELLS YOU

- What we found
- That it is not a risk to public health
- How chemicals got there
- Why and how the site will be cleaned up
- How you can tell us what you think
- Who to contact for more information

The site cleanup will be conducted by the Claremont Unified School District (CUSD) under the oversight of our state agency, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). CUSD is responsible for the site cleanup. Our agency makes sure the cleanup work meets state and federal standards that protect the public's health and the environment. Under the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a draft Notice of Exemption was prepared for this project. It has been determined that the proposed cleanup will not have a significant negative effect on the environment.

SITE INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

The CUSD conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the site in August 2002, which included a review of the previous land uses of the site and the surrounding area. Prior to development, the site and surrounding area were used for agricultural purposes, indicating residual agricultural chemicals could be present in the soil. As a result, in 2003, the CUSD conducted a Preliminary Endangerment Assessment (environmental investigation) on the site under DTSC oversight. The site work included the collection and analysis of soil samples at various areas of the property and also at four locations on the adjacent properties.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

February 23, 2004 -
March 23, 2004

We invite you to provide us with your comments and questions about the soil removal plan for the Proposed La Puerta Elementary School. The purpose of the public comment period is to give the community an opportunity to submit comments on the removal action plan. On page 3 and 4 of this fact sheet we provide information on who to write your comments to, and where to find the technical reports that provide detailed environmental information.

The chemicals of potential concern included volatile organic compounds (organic liquids including common solvents), semi-volatile organic compounds, pesticides, metals (including arsenic), petroleum hydrocarbons (chemical fuels) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs, toxic hydrocarbon oils used for insulation in some older electrical transformers).

Based on the soil analysis and the health risk assessment, it was concluded that arsenic was the only contaminant in concentrations that may pose a threat to human health. Arsenic is a naturally occurring element, however, inorganic arsenic compounds are also used as components of pesticides. The site investigation detected low levels of arsenic in all of the areas collected, with one exception. Elevated concentrations of arsenic (above background levels) were detected in the northeast corner of the site, under a 3,300 square foot portion of the existing asphalt paved parking area. Background concentrations are those that would be detected in the native soils throughout the area. At this site the background concentrations of arsenic were determined to range up to 9 milligrams/kilograms. The highest detected concentration of arsenic, 141 milligrams/kilograms, was reported in a soil sample collected in the northeast area under the parking lot from a depth of 1 foot.

Petroleum hydrocarbons were also detected in the shallow soil in the northeast corner of the site, in the same area where the elevated concentrations of arsenic was found. Although it was established that the extent of the petroleum hydrocarbons contamination at the site does not pose any significant threat to the groundwater, the petroleum hydrocarbon contaminated soil will be removed during the planned arsenic removal work.

The DTSC approved the final Preliminary Endangerment Assessment report in September 2003. As a result of the site investigation findings, a site cleanup, known as a removal action, is being proposed to remove and reduce the risk posed by the arsenic in the soil. The plan includes removal of the arsenic contaminated soil that exceeds background concentrations. Since the impacted area is in a small northeastern corner of the site, which can be isolated, the DTSC issued an approval letter for partial site clearance on Dec. 19, 2003. The removal action area will be fenced during the soil excavation work. Once the contaminated soil is removed, the potential risk will be reduced to levels that will be safe for students and

faculty. DTSC will oversee the removal action, and will ensure that the removal is performed in a manner that does not result in any harm to people or the environment.

NOT A RISK TO THE PUBLIC

The good news is the site is not a risk to the people who work there or to the people who live nearby. This is because arsenic affected soil is located under a paved area. This surface works as protective barrier between the chemicals and the public.

HOW THE CHEMICALS GOT THERE - WHY WE NEED A CLEANUP

Although arsenic occurs naturally in the environment there is a possibility that the arsenic found at this site came from the previous agricultural land use, and related operations such as mixing or handling pesticides. The site was used for agricultural purposes from at least 1928 to 1968. In 1967, the CUSD bought the property and in 1968 developed the site with the present day land use. Prior to 1968 a large above ground storage tank was located at the northeast corner of the site. Due to the absence of any records of specific agricultural chemical use at the site, it is speculated that the presence of arsenic in the surface soil may be related to the on-site mixing of arsenic chemicals in the northeast corner of the site (near the former above ground storage tank). It is possible that the arsenic impacted soil was spread throughout the identified area during the grading and site development work in 1968.

Since 1968, the contaminated soil has been located under a paved parking lot. In the future when the school district begins the construction process to build the proposed elementary school we need to remove the arsenic contaminated soil to make sure students and faculty are not exposed. Based on the approved school design, the area of arsenic contaminated soil is planned to be a paved parking lot. However, the contaminated soil must be removed to allow the school district to have unrestricted use of the property, including the option to use the area for an athletic field or playground area.

CLEANUP OPTIONS

Several cleanup options were evaluated including: No Action, Onsite Containment, and Excavation and Disposal. Protection of human health and the environment was the most important factor considered.

Any cleanup plan has to protect public health and the environment, have a reasonable cost, and be shared with the community. We think the best plan that meets these goals is Excavation and Disposal. In order to meet DTSC approved cleanup targets, it is estimated that about 20 truckloads of contaminated soil needs to be removed and transported for disposal. The preferred cleanup option was selected because it was determined to be effective, feasible, permanent and have a reasonable cost.

HOW WE PLAN TO CLEAN IT UP

The proposed removal action plan involves using construction equipment to remove about 314 cubic yards (440 tons) of soil and haul it to a state approved disposal facility. After we haul it away, CUSD will bring in clean soil to fill the excavation. The cleanup activities may last about three weeks. This includes digging out the soil, transporting it, and follow-up confirmation soil sampling and analysis. Although this is the cleanup we propose, we would very much like to hear your thoughts and comments (see Comment Form).

DEALING WITH SAFETY AND DUST DURING CLEANUP

If the cleanup plan is approved as written, some noise from the earth-moving equipment can be expected during the soil removal. This will be kept to a minimum. Site work will be conducted Monday through Friday during normal business hours. No traffic delays are expected while the trucks are driving to and from the site. The trucks will exit the site and travel south on Forbes Avenue, turn west on Baseline Avenue and proceed 1.2 miles to North Towne Avenue. The trucks will turn south and merge onto the 210 Freeway, westbound. The trucks will then proceed to the disposal facility. Here are some of the actions CUSD will take to ensure safety on the site and minimize dust during the cleanup action:

- The removal area will be fenced off.
- The fence covered to control dust and mitigate noise.
- All vehicles will maintain slow speeds while on the property.
- Air monitoring will be conducted to measure the dust levels during excavation.
- The area will be lightly sprayed or misted with clean water.
- Water mist will be sprayed on soil loaded into the transport trucks.
- The trucks will be secured with covers as they leave the site.
- Plastic sheets will cover the piles of soil during non-working hours.

YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE COMMENTS

You have the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Removal Action Workplan. A 30-day Public Comment period begins on Feb. 23, 2004, during which time you can review and send comments to us regarding your questions and thoughts about the proposed cleanup option. Your comments must be postmarked no later than March 23, 2004. Send comments to: Mr. Rao Akula, DTSC Project Manager, 1011 N. Grandview Ave., Glendale, CA 91201. All comments received during the comment period are considered by DTSC before making a final decision on approving, amending or denying the RAW. Once a decision has been made a "Response to Comments" document will be sent to those who submitted comments, or questions.

WHAT'S NEXT

Fieldwork for the removal action is proposed to start in June 2004. After the removal action is complete, DTSC will approve and certify the site is safe for school construction and CUSD can develop this portion of the property. The Proposed La Puerta Elementary School site includes 56,738 square feet for classroom and school facilities for nearly 600 kindergarten through sixth grade students.

WHERE TO FIND SITE DOCUMENTS (Technical Reports)

The proposed cleanup plan is described in detail in the "Removal Action Workplan" for the proposed La Puerta Elementary School. This document also describes how we looked at the possible health risks. All the documents about this site are available for your review at the following locations:

Claremont Public Library

208 N. Harvard Ave., Claremont, CA 91711

Phone: (909) 621-4902

Hours: Mondays - Closed,

Tuesday - Thursday 2-8 p.m.,

Friday & Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.,

Sunday 1-5 p.m.

Department of Toxic Substances Control

Regional Records Office

1011 N. Grandview Ave., Glendale, CA 91201

Contact: Jone Barrio

Phone: (818) 551-2886

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Claremont Unified School District

2080 N. Mountain Ave., Claremont, CA 91711

Contact: Ralph Patterson

Phone: (909) 398-0602

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

WHO TO CALL FOR INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the cleanup project or cleanup activities, please call the following persons at our agency: Ms. Treva Miller, Public Participation Specialist, at (818) 551-2846; or Mr. Rao Akula, DTSC Project Manager, at (818) 551-2847. Si desea información en español, comuníquese con: Sra. Leticia Hernández, Especialista en Participación Pública del DTSC, al (714) 484-5488. For media inquiries, please contact Ms. Jeanne Garcia, Public Information Officer, at (818) 551-2176. For more information about the DTSC, please visit our web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

If you have any questions about the cleanup work schedule, please call Mr. Ralph Patterson, Assistant Superintendent Business Services, CUSD Office, at (909) 398-0602. For information related to the school design and construction, please call: Jeff Shoemaker, Project Manager, CUSD Office, at (909) 398-0609. Si desea información en español, comuníquese con: Margarita Roby, del CUSD, al (909) 398-0609, ext. 75002.

NOTICE TO HEARING IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

TDD users can use the California Relay Service at (1-888-877-5378) to reach DTSC Public Participation Specialist, Ms. Treva Miller, at (818) 551-2846.